(vi) Counselling and motivating staff to ensure punctual running.

(vii) Liaison with State Government to tackle the law and order problems and miscreant activities.

(viii) Upgrading infrastructure and systems etc.

Ex-gratia Payment

2198. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 691 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 25th July 2003 and state the compensation or ex-gratia payments made to the victims or their next of kin?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): No compensation has so far been paid. Compensation will be paid soon after the claims filed by the claimants are decreed by Railway Claims Tribunal. However, ex-gratia amounting to Rs. 49.9 lakhs has already been paid to the dependants of dead and injured passengers.

Vendors moving with burning stoves in compartment

2199. SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what specific measures have been taken to avoid fire accident in the trains;

(b) why does Railways allow tea/ coffee vendors to carry burning stoves/chulahs in the compartments; and

(c) why there is no fire extinguishers existed in all compartments in Indian Railway even after many incidents of fire reported in the past?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) Indian Railways are continuously upgrading the fire retardant properties of each and every material used in coach construction so that the coach can sustain prolonged periods of exposure to fire caused in-advertently from external sources such as inflammable material in the luggage of passengers etc.

Some of the important specific measures that have been taken over the years in this direction are:—

* Switching over from a wooden body coach to an all metal construction.

* Adoption of relevant portions of Europeon Railway fire protection and fire fighting standards (UIC-564II) and IS specifications for flammability and fire retardance properties of various material utilized in manufacture of Indian Railway Coaches.

* Adoption of naval Specification (NCD 1409, 1410 and 1411) and FAR (Airline Safety) specification for toxicity and smoke level emission for upholstery, fabric and curtains.

Notices are also displayed prominently in all coaches prohibiting passengers from carrying any inflammable or explosive materials.

(b) Carrying of inflammable articles and unauthorized hawking is strictly prohibited in station premises/trains as per provisions of law and no person carrying such articles is allowed. Regular checks and drives are conducted by the Railway staff in trains against those persons who carry inflammable and prohibited articles unauthorizedly, and action is taken against them as provided in law.

(c) Fire extinguishers are provided in all types of rolling stock, which are continuously manned by Railway personnel, such as train engine, guard compartment, pantry car and air-conditioned coaches. Fire extinguishers are not provided in other unmanned coaches as safe keeping of these costly items cannot be ensured.

MMTS in Hyderabad

2200. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) by when the Multi Model Transport System (MMTS) will be launched in Hyderabad;

(b) whether Railways propose to introduce MMTS in other cities; and

(c) if so, tne details thereof?